

very soon and dragged it away. Again disturbed in the afternoon and now having eaten the greater part of the kill, as the swollen stomach proved, it returned within 10 minutes after the coolies had left. In this connection I want to mention a superstitious belief of the natives. Before the machan was left, a flower was put by a coolie behind the ear of the dead man. The natives firmly believe that the tiger then will return to its kill within a short time. In this special case this opinion will certainly find a widespread confirmation in that part of the country because it proved to be so surprisingly correct.

ULRICH GUEHLER.

#### REVIEW.

A HANDLIST OF MALAYSIAN BIRDS; A SYSTEMATIC LIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE MALAY PENINSULA, SUMATRA, BORNEO AND JAVA, INCLUDING THE ADJACENT SMALL ISLANDS, by Frederick Nutter Chasen... Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, Straits Settlements. No. 11, December, 1935.

This publication, representing the first *Systema Avium* of a single sub-region of the Oriental Region, fills a long-felt need. It will prove invaluable as a reference work, not only to students of the Malaysian ornis, but to all who have occasion to deal with the systematics of Oriental birds. For those interested in the avifauna of Siam it possesses an especial importance, not merely because it treats of a neighbouring sub-region, but particularly because Mr. Chasen's Malaysia extends to Lat. 10° N., which is at the narrowest part of the Isthmus of Kra, thus embracing several Siamese provinces.

The author divides the Malaysian Sub-region into four provinces—Malayan, Sumatran, Bornean and Javan—in accord with natural distinctions, zoölogical and geographical. These differences are discussed in his introduction. In the body of the work, under each avian form is given the geographical distribution in relation to the four provinces. In a limited number of cases the distribution is given as "Malay States" or "Peninsular Siam," to indicate that the bird in question occurs in the southern half of the Peninsula but not in the northern, or *vice-versa*; otherwise, the Malayan Province is represented by the term "Malay Peninsula." An unusual feature of so technical a work is the addition of English names. A zoögeographical map and a profusion of footnotes increase the value of the publication.

While the systematic order followed is, with minor changes, that of Sharpe's "Handlist," the author holds somewhat advanced views on what constitutes the species and, at the same time, unites many genera usually kept separate; this results in a number of novel

combinations of names. Amongst the Siamese birds affected, we note that the genera *Otocompsa* and *Molpastes* are here included in the genus *Pycnonotus*. Such changes are largely a matter of personal opinion, but we cannot agree that both *Ardeola bacchus* and *A. speciosa* are conspecific with the European *ralloides* until more is known of the breeding-range of *Ardeola speciosa continentis* Salomonson, which, in South-eastern Siam, occurs side by side with *bacchus* in April, when both forms are in full nuptial plumage.

Mr. Chasen has uncovered old records of the occurrence of the rare Chinese Egret, *Egretta eulophotes* (Swinh.) in Peninsular Siam; these have been overlooked by other cataloguers of Siamese birds.

The Director of the Raffles Museum is to be congratulated on his eminently successful completion of a long and arduous task, as well as on the apparently entire absence of the typographical errors which so often mar a work of this nature.

H. G. D.

May, 1936.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECTION.

##### 25TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

Held at the Society's building on February 19th., 1936 at 6.45 p.m. Dr. A. G. Ellis, Leader of the Natural History Section, was in the chair and 30 members and visitors attended.

The Leader opened the meeting by calling on Luang Siribaed to explain his demonstration of *Bacillus siamensis*, a new species of bacteria recently discovered by him. Luang Siribaed had living specimens under microscopes which showed the motility of *B. siamensis* as compared with *B. anthracis*, and he distinguished the new species from *B. subtilis*, (a non-pathogenic form) by showing two guinea-pigs inoculated with *B. siamensis* which were showing lesions and symptoms of septicaemia.

Dr. Ellis then introduced Nai Siah, a local taxidermist, who showed several interesting specimens. There were two living snakes, namely a King-Cobra of medium size and an albino Cobra.

Nai Siah said that the latter were rare and this was the third he had ever seen. It came from Ayuthia province. He then showed two beautifully stuffed animals, a flying-fox and a black-ringed lizard from Nakorn Sritammarat. The Siamese name for this reptile is "kapachang" ຄະປ່າງ and Nai Siah said that it had a reputation among the country people in the South of giving a very poisonous bite. According to Phra Charan of the Pasteur Institute it is harmless.

Nai Siah mentioned that as a boy he had collected reptiles for Dr. Malcolm Smith, the last President of the former Natural History Society of Siam.